MARVEL COMICS
MAVERICK
JUL
#11
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Omega Red!
DIRECT EDITION
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MAVERICK

Clandestine warfare is a wildly unpredictable and dangerous game. For **Maverick**, it is a way of life.

A master in the deadly art of espionage, his unique mutant physiology and state-of-the-art weapons arsenal have become his stock-in-trade.

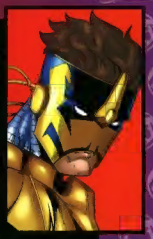
Currently suffering the effects of a terminal illness which is slowly consuming his body from within, Maverick is living proof that one's control over one's destiny is somewhat limited at best.

Haunted by his past. Hunted by his foes. Betrayed by his own body. In many ways, Maverick has good reason to fear life more than he does death.

Yet still he clings to life, all the while struggling to fill the little time he has left with some sense of purpose. Especially now that he has finally found a family to call his own— a testament to the fact that the ties that bind are often forged in the face of great adversity.

MAVERICK

A former CIA operative working for Team-X, David North became a mercenary for hire who goes by the moniker Maverick. Since then, he has specialized in the dirty jobs that no one else wants to do yet desperately need doing, using his mutant power to absorb and rechannel kinetic impact at will. Infected with the Legacy Virus and faced with an uncertain future, Maverick has no way of knowing what will kill him first: his many enemies... or his own body.

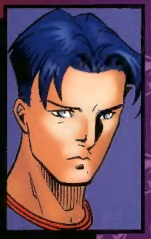


IVAN PUSHKIN

The powerful head of the Russian mafia, Pushkin's ruthless and unmerciful tactics have earned him the name Ivan the Terrible. Pushkin frequently enlists his bodyguards/enforcers, Hammer and Sickle, to keep his enemies in line. Pushkin is constantly trying to expand his territory, and intends for nothing to get in his way.

BRIAN JOHNSON

At sixteen, Brian Johnson learned he was a mutant and that he had contracted the Legacy Virus. Maverick arranged for Brian and his family to be relocated after anti-mutant violence destroyed their home. Though Brian possesses the ability to emit electrically-charged bursts of energy, his control over these powers is becoming increasingly erratic as his condition worsens.



OMEGA RED

Omega Red (a.k.a. Arkady) is a former mutant secret "super soldier" of the Soviet Intelligence Agency. He was implanted with carbonadium coils which he can shoot forward from his wrists in order to ensnare his victims. Due to his mutant "death factor" he must drain the life forces of others in order to remain active.

PREVIOUSLY IN

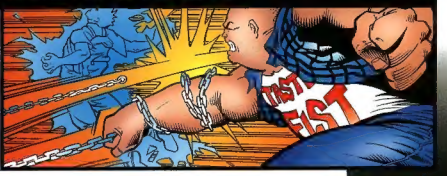
MAVERICK

After being captured by Ivan Pushkin, Maverick attempted a desperate escape from his compound.

Unfortunately, his attempt was unsuccessful, and Maverick soon found himself imprisoned in a dungeon, where he would be left to die.

His only hope was the fact that he wasn't alone. There was one other prisoner trapped in the darkness, and perhaps together, they could find a path to freedom.

Back home, Brian Johnson was defending himself and Doc Keller against a group of thugs. When his powers were exhausted, Brian was soundly defeated, and the hoodlums moved in for the kill...



Design by COMICRAFT (JG/JM/JEM)

Stan Lee presents:

Red Reign Part 2

Raising the Stakes

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LETTERS

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BOB HARRAS
EDITOR IN CHIEF

THE COOLER..
1637 HOURS.
INSIDE THE ICY DUNGEON BENEATH IVAN PUSHKIN'S PRIVATE ESTATE IN BORIVICHI, RUSSIA, AN IMPRISONED MAVERICK BECOMES ACQUAINTED WITH HIS CELLMATE...
THE RED GUARDIAN?! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD!
I COULD SAY THE SAME ABOUT YOU, COMRADE.
YOU COULD...

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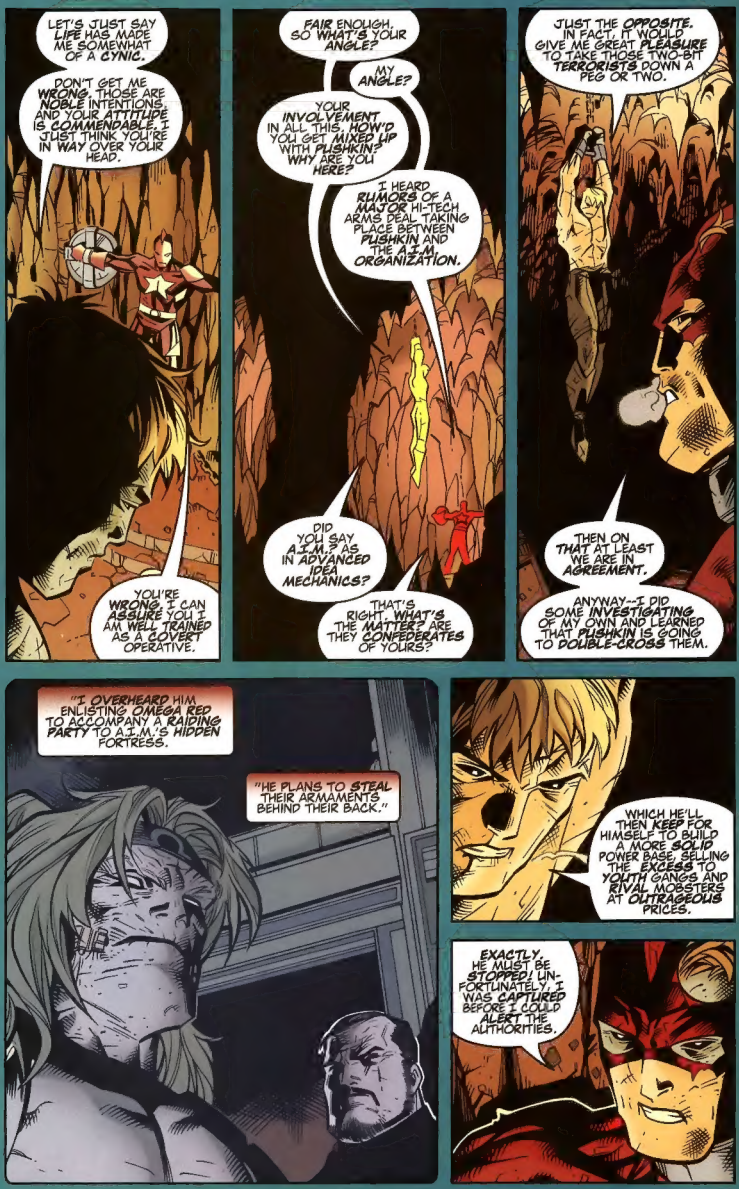
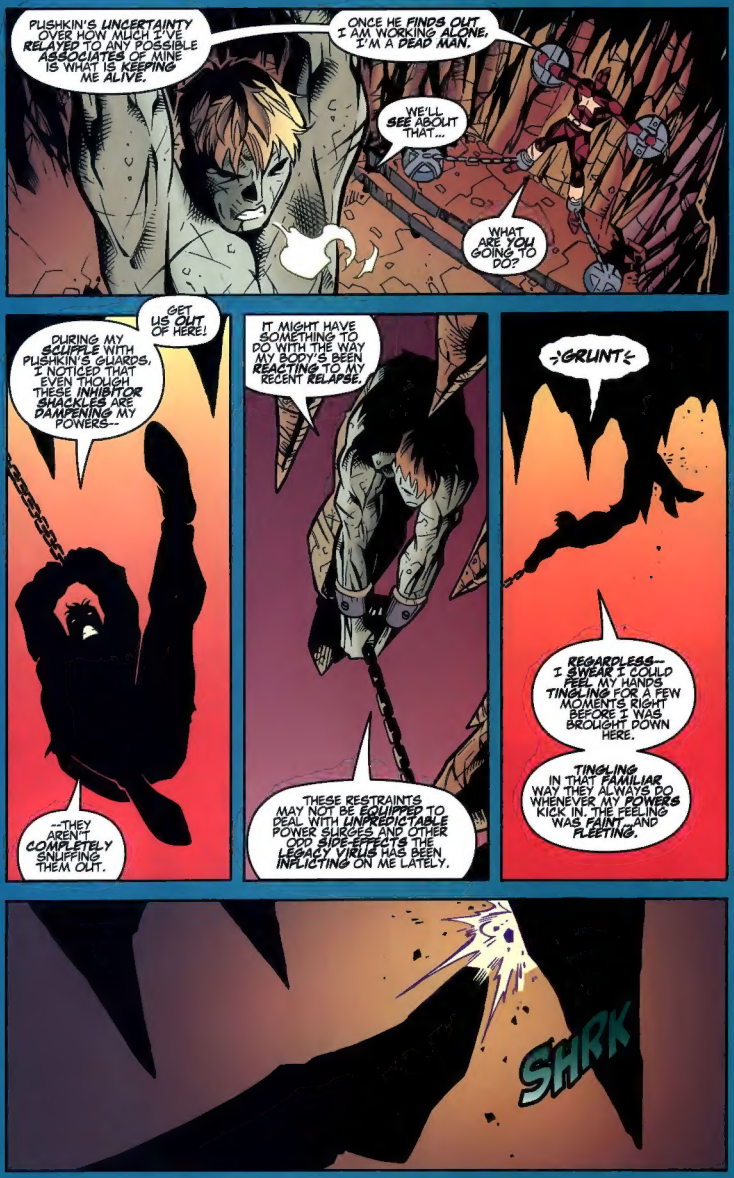
...EXCEPT THAT I'M THE GENUINE ARTICLE--WHILE YOU'RE EITHER AN IMPOSTOR OR A WANNABE.
THE ORIGINAL RED GUARDIAN WAS KILLED IN ACTION A LONG TIME AGO. THAT'S A FACT.
BESIDES WHICH, I KNEW ALEXI SHOSTAKOV PERSONALLY, AND YOU'RE DEFINITELY NOT HIM.
I NEVER CLAIMED TO BE ALEXI.
THEN WHY THE SUIT?
WHO'S PULLING YOUR STRINGS?
I DON'T LIKE YOUR TONE, MAVERICK.
I'M NOBODY'S PUPPET. I'M A FREE AGENT.
THE RED GUARDIAN WAS INTENDED TO BE THE SOVIET UNION'S COUNTERPART TO CAPTAIN AMERICA.
THOUGH SHOSTAKOV FAILED IN THE ROLE, THE IDEA OF A RED GUARDIAN IS STILL SOUND.
WITH THE RECENT COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION, THE NEED FOR A HOME-GROWN HERO IS EVEN GREATER NOW THAN IT WAS THEN.
IN THIS AGE OF SHAMELESS DISGRACE AND CORRUPTION, OUR PEOPLE NEED SOMEONE THEY CAN LOOK UP TO AND RESPECT.
SOMEONE WILLING TO TAKE A STAND AND FIGHT AGAINST OPPRESSION AND INJUSTICE. A HERO WHO CAN INSTILL PRIDE IN OUR CHILDREN, AND BE A SYMBOL OF HOPE.
MEANING YOU.
LOOK--I MAY BE AN IDEALIST AT HEART, BUT I AM NOT AN IDIOT, A GLORY HOUND OR A THRILL SEEKER.
I SIMPLY WISH TO SERVE MY PEOPLE IN WHATEVER WAY I CAN. WHY DO YOU FIND THAT SO HARD TO BELIEVE?


LET'S JUST SAY LIFE HAS MADE ME SOMEWHAT OF A CYNIC.
DON'T GET ME WRONG, THOSE ARE NOBLE INTENTIONS AND YOUR ATTITUDE IS COMMENDABLE. I JUST THINK YOU'RE IN WAY OVER YOUR HEAD.
YOU'RE WRONG. I CAN ASSURE YOU I AM WELL TRAINED AS A COVERT OPERATIVE.
FAIR ENOUGH. SO WHAT'S YOUR ANGLE?
MY ANGLE?
YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN ALL THIS. HOW'D YOU GET MIXED UP WITH PUSHKIN? WHY ARE YOU HERE?
I HEARD RUMORS OF A MAJOR HI-TECH ARMS DEAL TAKING PLACE BETWEEN PUSHKIN AND THE A.I.M. ORGANIZATION.
DID YOU SAY A.I.M.? AS IN ADVANCED IDEA MECHANICS?
THAT'S RIGHT. WHAT'S THE MATTER? ARE THEY CONFEDERATES OF YOURS?
JUST THE OPPOSITE. IN FACT, IT WOULD GIVE ME GREAT PLEASURE TO TAKE THOSE TWO-BIT TERRORISTS DOWN A PEG OR TWO.
THEN ON THAT AT LEAST WE ARE IN AGREEMENT.
ANYWAY--I DID SOME INVESTIGATING OF MY OWN AND LEARNED THAT PUSHKIN IS GOING TO DOUBLE-CROSS THEM.
"I OVERHEARD HIM ENLISTING OMEGA RED TO ACCOMPANY A RAIDING PARTY TO A.I.M.'S HIDDEN FORTRESS.
"HE PLANS TO STEAL THEIR ARMAMENTS BEHIND THEIR BACK."
WHICH HE'LL THEN KEEP FOR HIMSELF TO BUILD A MORE SOLID POWER BASE, SELLING THE EXCESS TO YOUTH GANGS AND RIVAL MOBSTERS AT OUTRAGEOUS PRICES.
EXACTLY. HE MUST BE STOPPED! UNFORTUNATELY, I WAS CAPTURED BEFORE I COULD ALERT THE AUTHORITIES.


PUSHKIN'S UNCERTAINTY OVER HOW MUCH I'VE RELAYED TO ANY POSSIBLE ASSOCIATES OF MINE IS WHAT IS KEEPING ME ALIVE.
ONCE HE FINDS OUT I AM WORKING ALONE, I'M A DEAD MAN.
WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT...
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
GET US OUT OF HERE!
DURING MY SCUFFLE WITH PUSHKIN'S GUARDS, I NOTICED THAT EVEN THOUGH THESE INHIBTOR SHACKLES ARE DAMPENING MY POWERS--
--THEY AREN'T COMPLETELY SNUFFING THEM OUT.
IT MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE WAY MY BODY'S BEEN REACTING TO MY RECENT RELAPSE.
THESE RESTRAINTS MAY NOT BE EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH UNPREDICTABLE POWER SURGES AND OTHER ODD SIDE-EFFECTS THE LEGACY VIRUS HAS BEEN INFLICTING ON ME LATELY.
-GRUNT-
REGARDLESS-- I SWEAR I COULD FEEL MY HANDS TINGLING FOR A FEW MOMENTS RIGHT BEFORE I WAS BROUGHT DOWN HERE.
TINGLING IN THAT FAMILIAR WAY THEY ALWAYS DO WHENEVER MY POWERS KICK IN. THE FEELING WAS FAINT... AND FLEETING.
SHRK

Imagine you're Batman™ and you've been thrown into a world of broken bones and twisted minds.

LEGENDS OF THE
DARK KNIGHT™

NNNN!
BLOODY HELL! ARMS FEEL LIKE THEY'RE ABOUT TO POP OUT OF THEIR SOCKETS...
CAN'T GET DISCOURAGED--JUST IGNORE THE PAIN AND TRY AGAIN...
I'M HOPING THAT MAYBE IF I ABSORB ENOUGH KINETIC ENERGY...
...I CAN SOMEHOW OVERLOAD THE SHACKLES' INHIBITORS AND BREAK FREE.
UMMF!
FINALLY--I'M ANCHORED.
WHAK
WHAK
WHAK
IT'S WORTH A SHOT, ANYWAY. JUST DON'T EXPECT QUICK RESULTS. THIS COULD TAKE A WHILE...
WHAM
SMACK
THWAK
WHAM

Welcome to
the nightmare.
DARK KNIGHT
PREMIUM
DARK KNIGHT
PREMIUM
WARNER BROS.
Kenner

1730 HOURS.
OVER AT THE MAIN HOUSE, RUTHLESS RACKETEER IVAN PUSHKIN CONFERS WITH THE DEADLY OMEGA RED--
--A DERANGED SERIAL KILLER WHO WAS TRANSFORMED INTO A SOVIET SUPER SOLDIER AFTER SURVIVING HIS OWN EXECUTION.
ALSO IN ATTENDANCE ARE PUSHKIN'S PERSONAL BODYGUARDS-- HAMMER AND SICKLE.
NOW THAT MY TRACKING INSTRUMENTS HAVE PINPOINTED THE EXACT LOCATION OF A.I.M.'S HIDDEN BASE, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE ACT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.
I WON'T TAKE THE CHANCE OF THEIR MOVING THE MERCHANDISE BEFORE WE STRIKE.
SO WHEN DO WE LEAVE?
WITHIN THE NEXT TWO HOURS.
FOR NOW, YOU CAN HELP HAMMER AND SICKLE TAKE THESE CRATES TO THE BARRACKS AND DISTRIBUTE THE CONTENTS.
WHAT'S IN 'EM?
WHY MUST YOU KEEP QUESTIONING THE MASTER? HE DID NOT HIRE YOU FOR YOUR CURIOSITY!

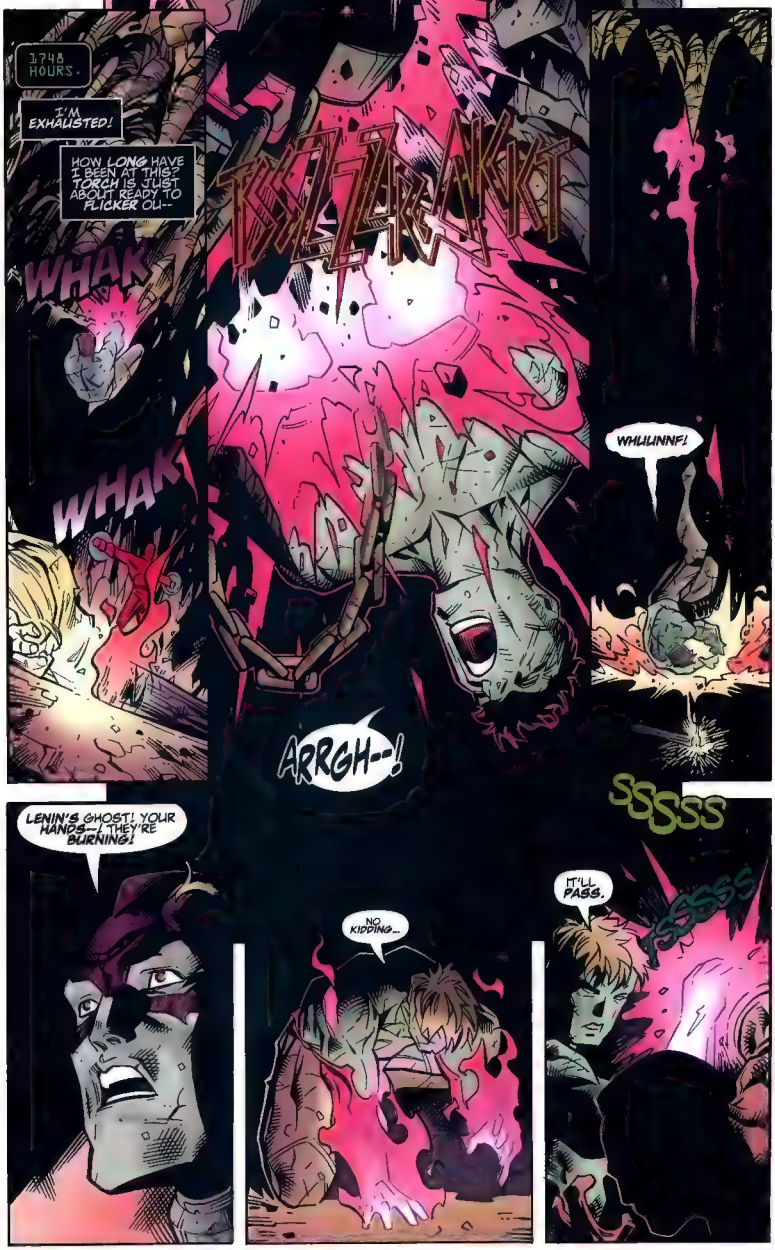
IT'S ALL RIGHT, HAMMER. ARKADY WILL FIND US SOON ENOUGH ANYWAY. THE CRATES CONTAIN UNIFORMS.
UNIFORMS? FOR WHO?

YOU, HAMMER AND SICKLE CAN STAY AS YOU ARE--BUT THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE RAIDING PARTY MUST BE PROPERLY ATTIRED.
I WANT YOU TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT THE FOOLS AT ADVANCED IDEA MECHANICS BELIEVE THAT A THIRD PARTY WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HEIST.

AND JUST WHO DO YOU HAVE IN MIND TO TAKE THE BLAME?
SEE FOR YOURSELF.

HYDRA?!

CONSIDERING THE ALREADY-EXISTING ANIMOSITY BETWEEN THEM AND THE A.I.M. ORGANIZATION, I CAN THINK OF NO ONE MORE APPROPRIATE FOR THE ROLE.
CAN YOU?


174 HOURS.
I'M EXHAUSTED!
HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN AT THIS? TORCH IS JUST ABOUT READY TO FLICKER OU--
WHAK
WHAK
KRAKKK

MOMENTS LATER, ABOVE THE UNDERGROUND CELL...
FSSSSSS
<WHAT THE--?!>
HERE GOES NOTHING--!
WHUUNH!
UUUK!
SPAWM
GLAD I MANAGED TO EXPEL ALL THE ENERGY I'D ABSORBED WITH THAT LAST BLOW.
SNEAKING AROUND THIS PLACE WILL BE DIFFICULT ENOUGH WITHOUT HAVING TO WORRY ABOUT MY HANDS GLOWING.
HELP ME THROW THESE TWO INTO THE BRIG...

WOLVERINE NO. 126

BELIEVE IN THE IMPOSSIBLE

DAY	MONTH	YEAR
27	MAY	1998

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CHRIS CLAREMONT
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MAY 27 1998

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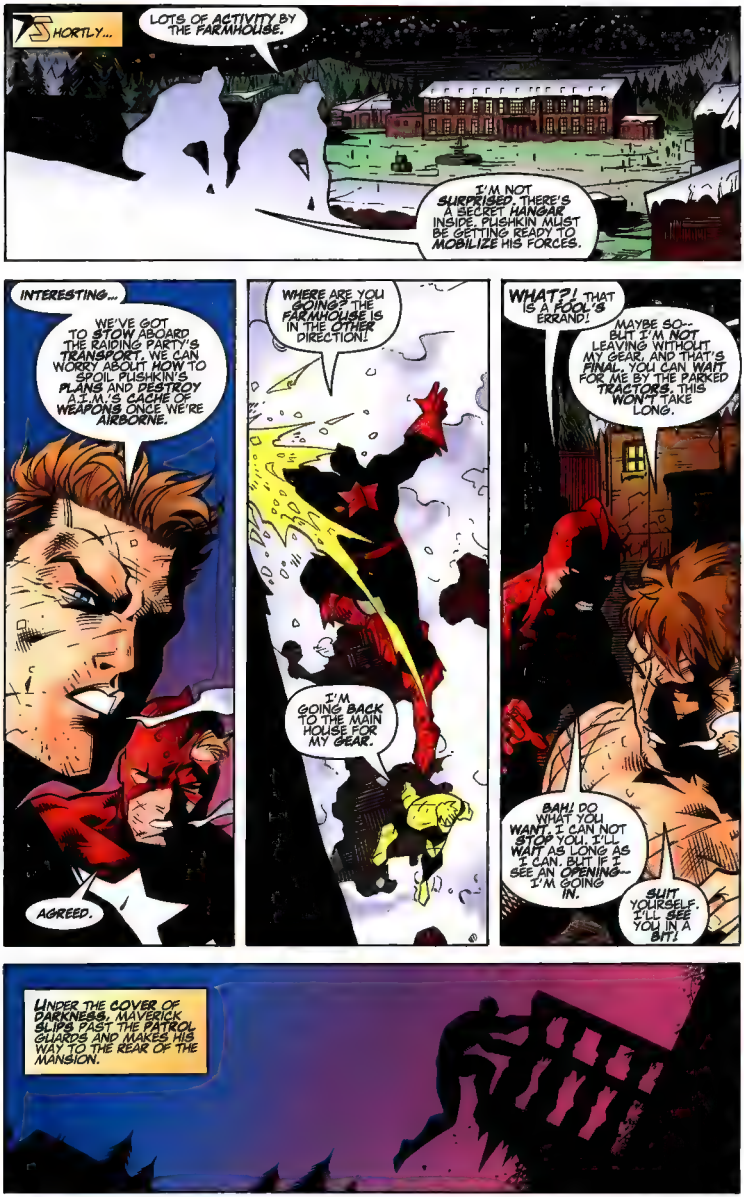
SHORTLY...
LOTS OF ACTIVITY BY THE FARMHOUSE.
I'M NOT SURPRISED. THERE'S A SECRET HANGAR INSIDE. PLISHKIN MUST BE GETTING READY TO MOBILIZE HIS FORCES.
INTERESTING...
WE'VE GOT TO STOW ABOARD THE RAIDING PARTY'S TRANSPORT. WE CAN WORRY ABOUT HOW TO SPOIL PLISHKIN'S PLANS AND DESTROY A.I.M.'S CACHE OF WEAPONS ONCE WE'RE AIRBORNE.
AGREED.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING? THE FARMHOUSE IS IN THE OTHER DIRECTION!
I'M GOING BACK TO THE MAIN HOUSE FOR MY GEAR.
WHAT?! THAT IS A FOOL'S ERRAND!
MAYBE SO-- BUT I'M NOT LEAVING WITHOUT MY GEAR, AND THAT'S FINAL. YOU CAN WAIT FOR ME BY THE PARKED TRACTORS. THIS WON'T TAKE LONG.
BAH! DO WHAT YOU WANT. I CAN NOT STOP YOU. I'LL WAIT AS LONG AS I CAN. BUT IF I SEE AN OPENING-- I'M GOING IN.
SUIT YOURSELF. I'LL SEE YOU IN A BIT!
UNDER THE COVER OF DARKNESS, MAVERICK SLIPS PAST THE PATROL GUARDS AND MAKES HIS WAY TO THE REAR OF THE MANSION.

MAYBE THIS WASN'T SUCH A HOT IDEA AFTER ALL. THERE'S GOTTA BE OVER FORTY ROOMS IN THIS PLACE...
...AND I REALLY DON'T HAVE THE SLIGHTEST IDEA WHERE TO--
WHOOPS! DEFINITELY DON'T WANNA GO THAT WAY!
ASSUMING THAT PUSHKIN IS STILL UNAWARE OF OUR ESCAPE, THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE IS JUST ABOUT MY ONLY ACE IN THE HOLE RIGHT NOW.
DON'T WANNA BLOW IT BY--
-GASP!-
UH-OH.
KERSSHHT

How to start the mother of all wars

{or why deception, cruelty and betrayal are your friends}

To start "The War of the Lions," you must use bold strokes. Regicides, double-crosses, violations of queens, good options all. Whatever your plan, once begun, a war of this magnitude is not to be trifled with. This is a brutal conflict of epic proportions, where each hallowed victory brings you closer to the very heart of darkness. Battle after battle, you will command your fighting party across magical lands protected by hostile forces. You will need the help of the bravest warriors, as well as armor, weapons, intricate battle plans and magical spells. Be ruthless. Be clever. Or be dead.

Training an army

{or how to ensure the biggest, baddest, meanest SOBs are on your side}

In Final Fantasy Tactics, you are Ramza, a young squad leader and an ally of Princess Ovelia. It's up to you to lead an elite fighting squad of your own choosing into battle. You must train them to be powerful Black Mages who can cast magic spells, Summoners who can awaken terrible beasts, Wizards, Ninjas, Bards, Archers, Thieves and more. There are 19 fighting classes and 400 abilities to master. If you go into battle ill-prepared, may the enemy make the blood run from your heart.

Effective battle strategies

{or further discussions from the annals of shoot first, ask questions later}

As the ancient history of warfare reveals, you will survive if your battle strategy is strong, and perish if it is not. You will lead the charge through impressive lands trying to gain the best strategic positions in forests, castle ramparts, swamps and valleys. You can buy and sell equipment, hire new soldiers and plan glorious battle strategies. May you conquer the enemy or may you die trying.

PlayStation

SQUARESOFT

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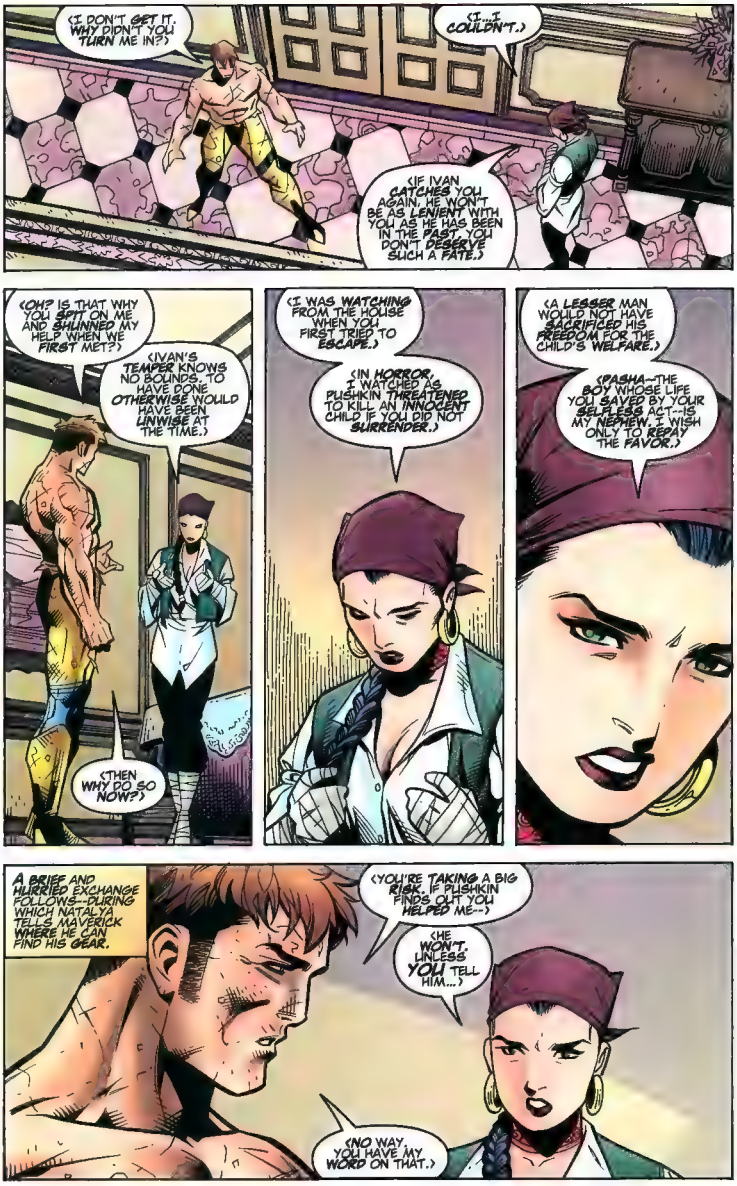
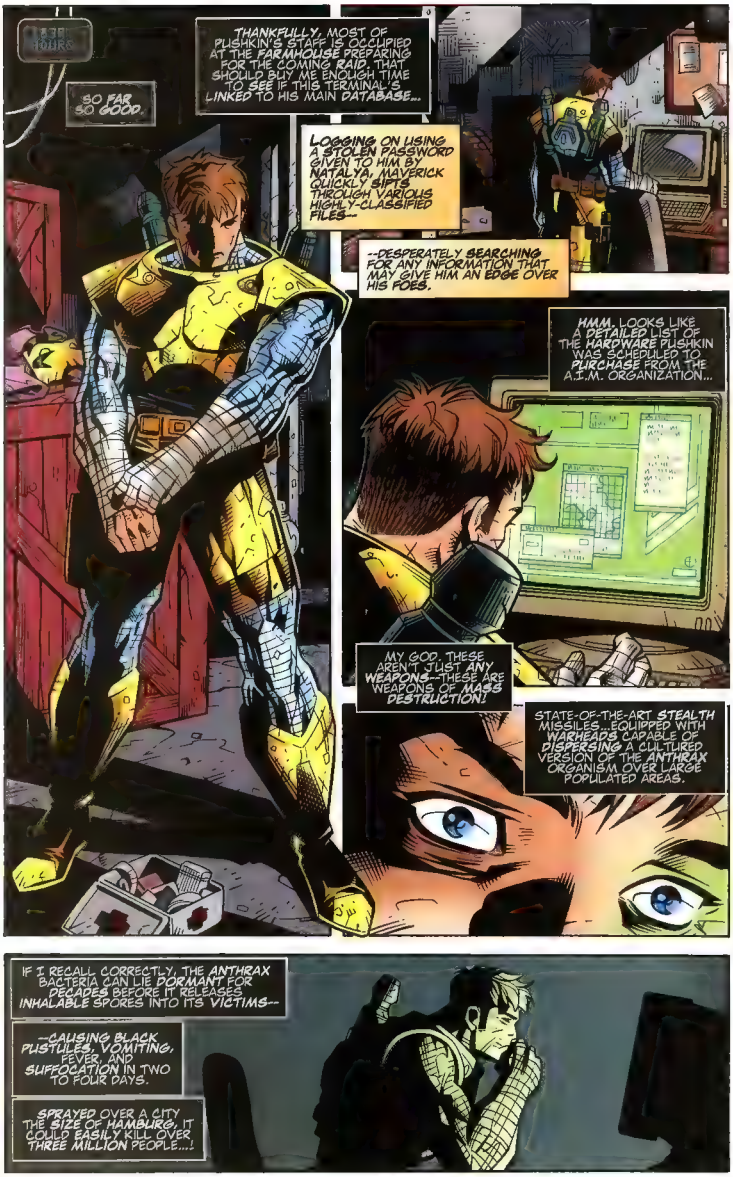
(NATALYA? WHAT IS IT, WOMAN? WHAT'S THE MATTER?)
(I SEE. YOU KNOW, THE WHOLE COMPOUND'S BEEN ON ALERT SINCE THOSE TWO PRISONERS WERE BROUGHT TO CAMP.)
(A SHAME THAT A PRETTY THING LIKE YOU SHOULD BE LEFT TO FEND FOR HERSELF...)
(GET OUT, YOU PIGS! GET OUT RIGHT NOW-- OR I'LL TELL IVAN THAT YOU FORCED YOURSELVES ON ME!)
(SN-NOTHING. JUST CLUMSINESS ON MY PART. PLEASE JUST LEAVE ME ALONE.)
(Z...)
THE GUARDS' FACES INSTANTLY PALE AS THEY RECALL WHAT HAPPENED TO THE LAST MAN ACCUSED OF ASSAULTING ONE OF PUSHKIN'S MISTRESSES.
(SIMMER DOWN, WENCH. NO NEED TO GET NASTY. YOU WANNA BE ALONE? YOU GOT IT!)
SONUVAGUN...!


I DON'T GET IT. WHY DIDN'T YOU TURN ME IN?
I...I COULDN'T.
IF IVAN CATCHES YOU AGAIN, HE WON'T BE AS LENIENT WITH YOU AS HE HAS BEEN IN THE PAST. YOU DON'T DESERVE SUCH A FATE.
OH? IS THAT WHY YOU SPIT ON ME AND SHUNNED MY HELP WHEN WE FIRST MET?
IVAN'S TEMPER KNOWS NO BOUNDS. TO HAVE DONE OTHERWISE WOULD HAVE BEEN UNWISE AT THE TIME.
THEN WHY DO SO NOW?
I WAS WATCHING FROM THE HOUSE WHEN YOU FIRST TRIED TO ESCAPE.
IN HORROR, I WATCHED AS PLUSHKIN THREATENED TO KILL AN INNOCENT CHILD IF YOU DID NOT SURRENDER.
A LESSER MAN WOULD NOT HAVE SACRIFICED HIS FREEDOM FOR THE CHILD'S WELFARE.
PASHA--THE BOY WHOSE LIFE YOU SAVED BY YOUR SELFLESS ACT--IS MY NEPHEW. I WISH ONLY TO REPAY THE FAVOR.
A BRIEF AND HURRIED EXCHANGE FOLLOWS--DURING WHICH NATALYA TELLS MAVERICK WHERE HE CAN FIND HIS GEAR.
YOU'RE TAKING A BIG RISK. IF PLUSHKIN FINDS OUT YOU HELPED ME--
HE WON'T. UNLESS, YOU TELL HIM...
NO WAY. YOU HAVE MY WORD ON THAT.


8 HOURS
SO FAR SO GOOD.
THANKFULLY, MOST OF PUSHKIN'S STAFF IS OCCUPIED AT THE FARMHOUSE PREPARING FOR THE COMING RAID. THAT SHOULD BUY ME ENOUGH TIME TO SEE IF THIS TERMINAL IS LINKED TO HIS MAIN DATABASE...
LOGGING ON USING A STOLEN PASSWORD GIVEN TO HIM BY NATALYA, MAVERICK QUICKLY SIFTS THROUGH VARIOUS HIGHLY-CLASSIFIED FILES--
--DESPERATELY SEARCHING FOR ANY INFORMATION THAT MAY GIVE HIM AN EDGE OVER HIS FOES.
HMM. LOOKS LIKE A DETAILED LIST OF THE HARDWARE PUSHKIN WAS SCHEDULED TO PURCHASE FROM THE A.I.M. ORGANIZATION...
MY GOD. THESE AREN'T JUST ANY WEAPONS--THESE ARE WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION!
STATE-OF-THE-ART STEALTH MISSILES...EQUIPPED WITH WARHEADS CAPABLE OF DISPERSING A CULTURED VERSION OF THE ANTHRAX ORGANISM OVER LARGE POPULATED AREAS.
IF I RECALL CORRECTLY, THE ANTHRAX BACTERIA CAN LIE DORMANT FOR DECADES BEFORE IT RELEASES INHALABLE SPORES INTO ITS VICTIMS--
--CAUSING BLACK PUSTULES, VOMITING, FEVER, AND SUFFOCATION IN TWO TO FOUR DAYS.
SPRAYED OVER A CITY THE SIZE OF HAMBURG, IT COULD EASILY KILL OVER THREE MILLION PEOPLE...!

After you've eaten this much

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you'd still have

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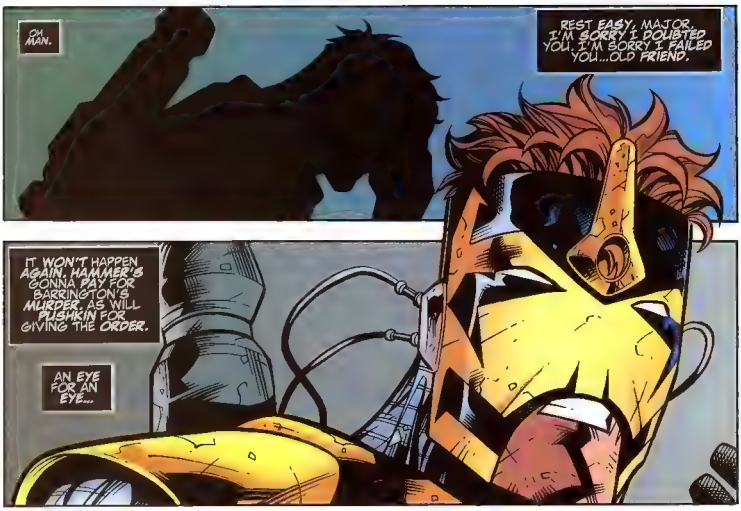
I CAN'T ALLOW THAT MADMAN TO GET A HOLD OF THOSE MISSILES. THE RED GUARDIAN AND I'LL HAVE TO FIND SOME WAY TO--
WHAT'S THIS...?

SEEMS LIKE PUSHKIN DID SOME INVESTIGATING ON HIS OWN CONCERNING MAJOR BARRINGTON WHILE I WAS UNDER THE SWAY OF DR. LANGSTON'S BRAINWASHING TREATMENTS.
ACCORDING TO THESE FINDINGS, BARRINGTON'S INVOLVEMENT WITH MY EX-WIFE WAS JUST A TALE CONCOCTED BY PUSHKIN SO THAT I WOULD MORE READILY DO HIS BIDDING.
WHICH MEANS BARRINGTON NEVER BETRAYED ME.
AND I--I SHOULDN'T HAVE ACCUSED HIM LIKE I DID WHEN I CONFRONTED HIM IN CANADA...


OH MAN.
REST EASY, MAJOR. I'M SORRY I DOUBTED YOU. I'M SORRY I FAILED YOU...OLD FRIEND.
IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN, HAMMER'S GONNA PAY FOR BARRINGTON'S MURDER, AS WILL PUSHKIN FOR GIVING THE ORDER.
AN EYE FOR AN EYE...

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- ☐ CAM Captain America
- ☐ THO Thor NEW!
- ☐ FAN Fantastic Four
- ☐ IRM Iron Man

Marvel Heroes

- ☐ AFT Alpha Flight
- ☐ DDV Daredevil
- ☐ HFH Heroes For Hire
- ☐ ZAR Ka-Zar
- ☐ SIL Silver Surfer
- ☐ INC The Incredible Hulk
- ☐ BLT Thunderbolts

Spider-Man

- ☐ AMZ Amazing Spider-Man
- ☐ PPK Spectacular Spider-Man
- ☐ SSM Sensational Spider-Man
- ☐ SPI Spider-Man

The X-Men

- ☐ CAB Cable
- ☐ DDP Deadpool
- ☐ GEN Generation X
- ☐ WOL Wolverine
- ☐ XME Uncanny X-Men
- ☐ FAC X-Factor
- ☐ MEN X-Men
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H85MD2

1903 HOURS.
I WAS JUST ABOUT TO GIVE UP ON YOU. FEELING BETTER NOW THAT YOU'VE GOT YOUR UNION SUIT BACK?
OH YEAH. I FELT NAKED WITHOUT IT.
WELL APPARENTLY YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO'S BECOME FASHION CONSCIOUS...
HUH? WHAT'S WITH ALL THE HYDRA OUTFITS?
IVAN THE TERRIBLE MUST BE PLANNING TO FRAME THEM FOR THE ROBBERY. THE PLOT THICKENS, EH?
YOU AIN'T HEARD THE HALF OF IT! COME ON--I'LL EXPLAIN ON THE WAY...!

THIS IS INSANE.
WE'RE WAY BEYOND OUTNUMBERED.
THERE MUST BE OVER FORTY ARMED TROOPS BOARDING THE CARRIER.
NOT TO MENTION OMEGA RED AND PUSHKIN'S GYPSY HENCHMEN.
ALL HEADING TOWARDS A HEAVILY FORTIFIED A.I.M. COMPOUND WHICH IS OVERRUN WITH EVEN MORE ENEMIES.
GOOD THING I WAS NEVER ONE TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE ODDS...!

NEXT ISSUE:

MORTAL COILS

JOIN US FOR THE EXCITING DOUBLE-SIZED CONCLUSION AS IT ALL HITS THE FAN!

BULLPEN BULLETINS

AVAILABLE MAY 13

SPIDER-MAN: THE MANGA
SPIDER-MAN has been defeated – and the main man in Tokyo is now MYSTERIO! By RYOICHI IKEGAMI! *14

STAR TREK: THE UNTOLD VOYAGES
The landmark limited series concludes with a double-sized blowout finale! The end of CAPTAIN JAMES T KIRK s second five-year mission aboard the STARSHIP ENTERPRISE coincides with the discovery of an ancient alien race that could change the galaxy forever! By GLENN GREENBERG and MICHAEL COLLINS! *5 95

MARVEL ANNUAL '98 starring DEADPOOL & DEATH
The stranger known as AJAX sends DEADPOOL off the mortal coil and straight into a one-on-one with DEATH herself! By JOE KELLY and STEVE HARRIS! $3.98

ALPHA FLIGHT
In this double-sized shocker, you'll learn the stunning secrets of DEPARTMENT H — and an ALPHAN will die! By STEVEN T SEAGLE and DUNCAN ROULEAU! *12

FURY/AGENT 13
SHARON CARTER's search for NICK FURY lands her smack dab in the middle of World War II, amongst the HOWLING COMMANDOS! By TERRY KAVANAGH and RAMON BERNADO! *2 95

IRON MAN
The BLACK WIDOW sets a trap – using TONY STARK as bait! But when the trap is sprung, can NATASHA bring Tony his armor on time? By KURT BUSIEK and PATRICK ZIRCHER! *6

MARVEL UNIVERSE
The stunning untold tale from World War II continues, as CAPTAIN AMERICA, the HUMAN TORCH, and the SUB-MARINER try to stop HYDRA from building an atom bomb! By ROGER STERN and STEVE EPTING! *2

AVENGERS: ROUGH CUT
A real collector's item -- a look at AVENGERS #1, reproduced directly from the pencils of GEORGE PÉREZ! Plus: KURT BUSIEK's original plot for the issue! BY KURT BUSIEK and GEORGE PÉREZ! *1

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN
When arachnids collide – the final showdown between SPIDEY and the BLACK TARANTULA! One will live – and the other will get squashed! By TOM DeFALCO and JOE BENNETT! *436

GENERATION X
For the first time PENANCE is free from the thrall of the despotic EMPLATE! But will her newfound freedom prove a curse or a blessing? by LARRY HAMA and TERRY DODSON! *40

MARVEL ADVENTURES
The sensational SILVER SURFER answers a distress call on a world he thinks is Earth – only to find himself powerless on a planet of SKRULLS! By RALPH MACCHIO and ANDY KUHN! *16

X-FACTOR
A squad of MANDROIDS shows up to arrest HAVOK for his crimes – but before they can deal with him they re going to have to face the fury of his ex-lover, POLARIS! By HOWARD MACKIE and LEE MODER! *147

X-MEN VISIONARIES: CHRIS CLAREMONT
Re-presenting the greatest stories from the unparalleled 17-year writing stint of CHRIS CLAREMONT on the uncanny X-MEN! 240 Pages! By CHRIS CLAREMONT, JOHN BYRNE, JIM LEE, ALAN DAVIS, and many more! TPB

Design by Richard Starkings and COMICRAFT

ITEM! Have you ever wondered how a Marvel comic is put together, from start to finish? Next week, we'll take you behind the scenes for a rare peek at the making of a Marvel mag in AVENGERS #1: ROUGH CUT! This 48-page commemorative edition presents, for the first time anywhere, KURT BUSIEK's original plot and GEORGE PÉREZ's ultra-detailed pencils to AVENGERS #1! It's all here in living black-and-white: Kurt s dynamic plot, just as he turned it in, and George's original pencils, untouched by any inker! You aspiring pencilers out there can take the plot and try to draw your own version of AVENGERS #1 – to see how it compares with the master! If you ever wanted to see what the Avengers look like before they re fully assembled, this is your chance! You can even compare it to the finished issue, just for kicks! Heck, who *wouldn't* want to take another gander at that gorgeous book?

ITEM! WADE WILSON, aka DEADPOOL, is not afraid of DEATH! In fact, he knows her very well! Just how well Wade is acquainted with the living personification of the afterlife will be revealed in MARVEL ANNUAL '98 STARRING DEADPOOL & DEATH! This 48-page annual, which is brought to you by regular DP scribe JOE KELLY and hot young artist STEVE HARRIS, also delves into DEADPOOL'S experience with the WEAPON X program! The story continues from issue #17 of DP's own monthly mag, where a deadly hunter named AJAX has been bumping off Weapon X survivors! You could say Ajax has started his own dead pool – and Wade Wilson is next on his list! If you think you've seen it all before, here's a little twist you weren't expecting – Deadpool dies on page 4! No kidding! But that's just the *beginning* of this twisted tale, in which the Merc with a mouth goes face-to-ugly-face with the grim reaper! Pick up this issue, and watch Wade go from Deadpool to dead. period!

ITEM! There's something about the number twelve that s just unlucky for ALPHA FLIGHT! Long-time Marvelites will remember that the team suffered the tragic death of their leader, GUARDIAN, in issue #12 of the original AF series. Next week, the ALPHANS will be celebrating the twelfth issue of their all-new series – and *another* member of their team is destined to perish! This double-sized issue has the team returning from their adventure in the MICROVERSE, eager to take on their shady bosses in DEPARTMENT H! But the Alphans are shocked to learn that someone has already beaten them to the punch! This issue is an ALPHA FLIGHT fan s dream come true, as it answers many of the questions that have pervaded the series since issue #1! The creative crew for this execution are writer STEVEN T SEAGLE, who this month is joined by artist DUNCAN ROULEAU, hot off his stint on X-FACTOR! Which Alphan will shuffle off to that great hero heaven in the sky? Will Guardian or SASQUATCH die for the second time? How about HEATHER HUDSON, aka VINDICATOR? Will PUCK's number finally come up? Or will the casualty be one of the new kids on the block, like FLEX or MURMUR? Pick up ALPHA FLIGHT #12, as this flight comes up one passenger short!

STAN'S SOAPBOX!

Hi, Heroes!

Imagine the pride a king must feel when he bestows knighthood on a deserving subject? Well, that's the way I feel every time I magnanimously bestow No-Prizehood on some deserving Marvelite during our International Awards Ceremony in the world-famous Marvel Amphitheatre. Just think, you too may one day find your letter in a future Soapbox – when you too shall share the glory and the grandeur of comicdom's most sought-after award with your noble fellow Laureates! And now, the time hath come to meet this issue's newly-empowered and most fortunate few...

Rodney Deavault of St, Louis, MO seems to be friends with a rumormonger as he asks:

"I heard rumors that, when you created The X-Men, you came up with Iceman because you wanted to create the opposite of The Human Torch. Is that true?"

As all of comicdom knows, Rod, I cannot tell a lie. I did, indeed, say to myself, "If Johnny Storm can be cool with heat, why can't Bobby Drake be hot with ice?" There's a little homily for literalists to ponder for the next few decades!

Here's a query from Justin Culbreth of Warrenton, MO. Hey, that makes two from MO!

"What is Peter Parker's middle name?"

Know somethin', JC? I never gave him a middle name! If I had, it would probably also begin with P! How does Peter Pierpont Parker grab ya? (That's what I thought!) In the Spidey newspaper strip, I have Mary Jane calling him "Peter Q. Parker" whenever she's mad at him – for no reason other than the fact that I think it sounds so skrootchy!

Erik Shaw of Nanticoke, PA seems very interested in geography:

"Why are most of the Marvel super heroes and villains based in New York City?"

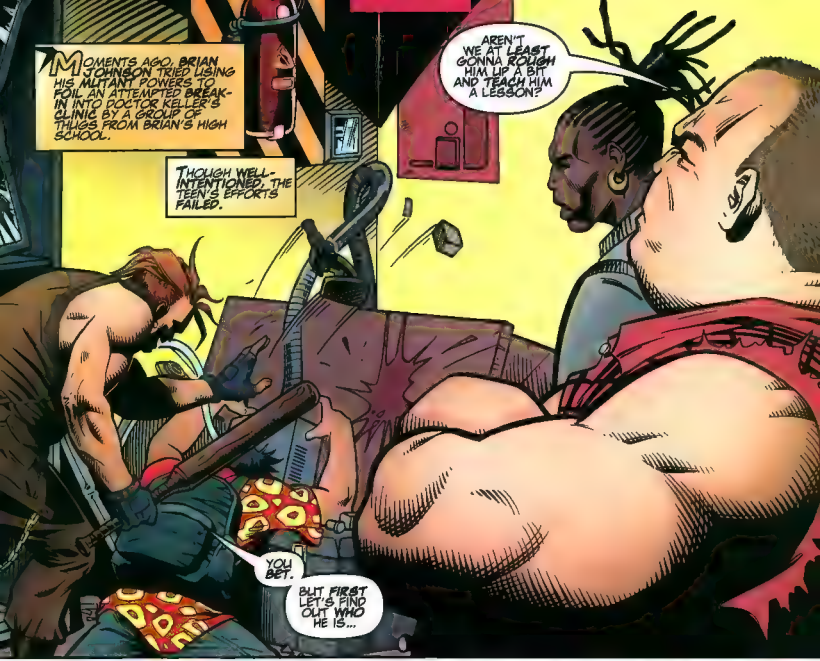
Because that's where I lived when I wrote 'em, Erik. It was easy to describe scenes and settings that were accurate and authentic. And everyone knows how accurate I am – how I personally photographed and surveyed every street and building in Asgard before starting to write the adventures of Thor!

Ere I tearfully tear myself away, I want to answer a question that many of you have asked: "How do I select each issue's No-Prize winners?" Here's the straight scoop, Bunky. Practically all of the letters are so clever and insightful that it's almost impossible for me to pick the best. So I take the cowardly way out, as usual, by reaching into our gigantic Marvel mixing bowl where all the letters are lovingly tossed and, with eyes tightly shut, I mix 'em all around, then – leaving it up to Fate – pick out a few at random! It ain't scientific, but it couldn't be fairer, right? And now, the E-mail address you've all been waiting for: *stanzfanz@aol.com*, plus the world's most glamorous mailing address: "Stan's Soapbox" c/o BULLPEN BULLETINS, Marvel Comics, 387 Park Ave. South, New York NY 10016. Heck, you can even send smoke signals, just so long as you stay in touch!

Excelsior!

Stan

Stan Lee


MOMENTS AGO, BRIAN JOHNSON TRIED USING HIS MUTANT POWERS TO FOIL AN ATTEMPTED BREAK-IN INTO DOCTOR KELLER'S CLINIC BY A GROUP OF THUGS FROM BRIAN'S HIGH SCHOOL.
THOUGH WELL-INTENTIONED, THE TEEN'S EFFORTS FAILED.
AREN'T WE AT LEAST GONNA ROUGH HIM UP A BIT AND TEACH HIM A LESSON?
YOU BET.
BUT FIRST LET'S FIND OUT WHO HE IS...

Stan Lee PRESENTS:

EXPOSED

JORGE GONZALEZ — WRITER
LEO FERNANDEZ — PENCILER
ANDREW PEPOY — INKER
CHRIS ELIOPOULOS & VIRTUAL CALLIGRAPHY — LETTERER
KEVIN SOMERS — COLORIST
FRANK PITTARESE — EDITOR
BOB HARRAS — EDITOR IN CHIEF

UNNF! GET OFF A ME, SPEED--!
WELL, WELL, SO THE CRIPPLE WANTS BACK IN THE GAME. YOU'RE GOING DOWN, DOC!
...NNNNNN...
HEAD'S THROBBING... I--WH--? DOC KELLER?! I'VE GOTTA HELP HIM!
SWOOSH
YOU BOYS MADE A HUGE MISTAKE BY MESSING WITH A FORMER NAVY SEAL. YOU WANNA PLAY ROUGH?
GRABBING THE DISCARDED CHAIN, DOC KELLER SNAPS IT LIKE A WHIP.
YOU GOT IT!
KRAK!
YEEOOW!
HURNH--?
CHUK!
TAG TEAM, MARCUS!
THWAK
UNNG!

CAN'T LET MARCUS AND THE OTHERS RECOGNIZE ME. HAVE TO IGNORE THE PAIN... AND CHARGE UP AGAIN...
ENVELOPING HIMSELF IN CASCADING STRANDS OF ENERGY, DISTORTING HIS FEATURES--
--BRIAN TRANSFORMS INTO HIS ELECTRICALLY-CHARGED BOLT PERSONA.
WATCH YOUR BACK, MARCUS--FREAK-BOY'S BACK ON HIS FEET!
I GOT 'IM!
OH NO YOU DON'T!
FRZZT
NARRG!
YOU LITTLE PUNK!
YOU'RE GONNA REGRET YOU DID THAT, MUTIE FREAK!
HEADACHE'S GETTING WORSE-- JUST LIKE WHEN MY POWERS FIZZLED OUT EARLIER...

NNNN.
AH GEEZ...PLEASE DON'T LET MY POWERS FAIL ME AGAIN!
NOT NOW...!
ULK-?!
NNNG!
FRZZRAKKT!
THAT WAS SOME STUNT YOU JUST PULLED. YOU OKAY?
YEAH, I THINK SO.
GOOD. THEN LET'S CALL THE POLICE.

LATER...
THANKS FOR NOT TELLING THE COPS ABOUT MY INVOLVEMENT IN ALL THIS.
DON'T MENTION IT. THOSE PUNKS MAY HAVE TRIED TO CONVINCE THE POLICE THAT SOME EVIL MUTANT ATTACKED THEM--
--BUT I CERTAINLY WASN'T GOING TO BACK THEM UP.
SO RELAX. YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. YOUR SECRET'S SAFE.
I'M CURIOUS THOUGH. WHY'D YOU COME BACK TO THE CLINIC IN THE FIRST PLACE?
I...I WANTED TO APOLOGIZE TO YOU FOR GIVING YOU SUCH A HARD TIME WHEN I WAS HERE FOR MY CHECK-UP.
YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT MY CRAPPY ATTITUDE. IT DOESN'T DO ME ANY GOOD. IT ONLY MAKES THINGS WORSE.
I MAY BE DYING--BUT I DON'T WANT TO WASTE WHATEVER TIME I HAVE LEFT WALKING AROUND WITH A BIG CHIP ON MY SHOULDER.
LIFE'S TOO SHORT TO TAKE FOR GRANTED...
DOES THIS MEAN YOU'RE GOING TO BE A MORE COOPERATIVE PATIENT FROM NOW ON?
ONLY IF YOU TEACH ME SOME OF THOSE MOVES YOU USED ON MARCUS. I WANNA SURPRISE MAVERICK WHEN HE GETS BACK.
DEAL.
JUST ONE MORE THING. WERE YOU REALLY A NAVY SEAL?
YOU BETCHA. I COME FROM A LONG LINE OF SEA LOVERS. SO DON'T CROSS ME, MATEY, OR I'LL HAVE MY OLD BUDDIES TOSS YOU INTO DAVY JONES'S LOCKER!
WHO'S DAVY JONES? ISN'T HE ONE OF THE MONKEES? I'M NOT TOO MUCH INTO THAT RETRO STUFF.
-SIGH- NEVER MIND. SOMETIMES YOU MAKE ME FEEL REAL OLD, KID. YOU KNOW THAT?
LET'S GET YOU HOME...
END

NORTH DECODED

Dear *NORTH DECODED*,

MAVERICK is one of the better mutant titles today, thanks to a team who slaves each month to deliver such a well-written and well-drawn book. Originally, I did not care for Maverick, since his appearances in other titles were not worthwhile, but I am glad I risked issue #1.

After reading issue #5, I have a question concerning a continuity problem. On page 13, Maverick says, "Before she (Birdie) was killed by Creed's own father.. . " I thought we didn't know who Sabretooth's father was. Who is his father and why, in issue 4 of the SABRETOOTH limited series, was it Graydon Creed, Victor's son, who killed Birdie?

Anyway, I am hoping you will develop the book with a bigger supporting cast and when the Legacy Virus has a cure, that Maverick will still be alive to get it. Oh, and what's going to happen to Chris? Is he going to have something monumental happen to him, like become a super hero? Well, until Maverick gives birth to triplets (which should never happen), Make Mine Marvel.

Chris Patrick
(Address withheld by request)

Thanks, Chris! What Maverick meant was that Graydon Creed's father, Sabretooth, killed Birdie. We hope this issue gave you more of the supporting cast you wanted. As for Chris, we have some big plans for Maverick's little buddy. Stay tuned and all will be revealed in just one short month! We sorta have to!

Dear *NORTH DECODED*,

I just read MAVERICK #8. It was cool. I also like mercs, so I read DEADPOOL and MAVERICK every month. I think it would be cool if they were hired for the same job. That way it would be a race to see who would get to the target first.

Matt Dudley
(Address withheld by request)

Interesting, Matt. You're not the only person who wants to see Deadpool and Maverick slug it out. We just might have to convince Matt Idelson and Joe Kelly that it's a good idea. The hard way!

Dear *NORTH DECODED*,

It is quite clear that MAVERICK is quickly growing into a most powerful title. Through brilliant action sequences, interesting characters and the threat of the Legacy Virus constantly lingering, it's one slam-fest after another. I love Jim Cheung and Andrew Pepoy's styles; they're perfect together. I was also pleased to see Sabretooth because I enjoy characters who are ex-teammates from the Weapon X era.

Here's an idea: I think a series should be created to tell the early stories and related experiments of all the Super Soldier programs. It could showcase one character or team every few issues, revealing some of their past and feature characters such as Maverick, Wolverine, Sabretooth, Weapon Alpha, Weapon Omega, and Omega Red. Until then keep the action cranked up!

Richard Thomes
(Address withheld by request)

We love Jim too, Richard! He and Andrew are truly amazing! But let's not forget Jorge Gonzalez, the man with the words of gold! Be sure to be here next month for a double-sized slam fest! We guarantee it will shock you!

Dear *NORTH DECODED*,

Count me in the group of fans that want to see Booster and Tether in the pages of MAVERICK! I totally loved them when they fought along side the X-Men in last year's UNCANNY X-MEN ANNUAL. Actually, it was Jorge Gonzalez's fantastic job on that book that got me interested in MAVERICK. I figured if he can write Storm and Cyclops and Booster in such a fresh, exciting manner, then maybe he can write a cool Maverick too. He certainly proved me right!

I just finished reading issue #8 and it was great! I really enjoyed the storyline, especially the focus on the Confessor and his mysterious ways. I also liked the scenes between Maverick and Chris (a.k.a. Brian). Looks like things are about to get really complicated for Maverick and I can't wait to read about it! Kudos to everyone on the creative team of this book; you're doing a great job!

Patrick Moore
400 S. Hauser 8-L
Los Angeles, CA 90036

Ah, Patrick, another vote for those wacky Morlocks, Booster and Tether! How cool are you? We love 'em too. Unfortunately, they're all in Africa and Maverick is in the former Soviet Union. How do we get them all together? We just might have to rough up editor Frank Pittarese a bit. He shouldn't be too hard to persuade; he has a low pain threshold! Be here next month for more from the Confessor and gang, as Maverick fights or dies!

NEXT ISSUE:

WILL MAVERICK SURVIVE HIS DESPERATE BATTLE ONLY TO BE KILLED BY THE LEGACY VIRUS? WILL HE BE CURED? WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO BRIAN AND HIS SUPER HEROIC CAREER? AND WILL ELENA COME OUT OF HER COMA? ALL THE ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND RIGHT HERE, NEXT MONTH, IN OUR DOUBLE-SIZED BLOWOUT FINAL ISSUE!

DESIGN BY COMICRAFT

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Step 5: VIEW *HUMOROUS* OUTCOME. [Fig. 112 h]

Could there be magic pixies creating the images inside?

We're not talking...

"It's ***easy-to-do***".

Fig. 24 A

Fig. 27 B

Fig. 45 J {insert}

Fig. 112 h

Fig. 23 x

Fig. 2 w

Fig. 16 S

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